

BM O
4
Z E L I D A.

A

T R A G E D Y.

B Y T H E A U T H O R.

— — — — *Præcipe lugubres,*

Cantus Melpomene. — — — H O R.



O X F O R D :

P R I N T E D F O R T H E A U T H O R . M , D C C , L X X I I .

A. D. L. F.

Y. E. A. R.

BY THE AUTHOR.

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P R O L O G U E

T O

Z E L I D A.

*S*INCE luckless lovers merit still a tear
 Flowing, to wet the melancholy bier;
 Since Virtue, combating with black despair,
 Still claimeth pity in the British fair;
 Our fervent Bard hath ev'ry pow'r confin'd
 To try the softest passage to the mind;
 By nervous strokes some useful rule t' impart,
 Refine the manners, and amend the heart.
 If, in th' attempt, his good intention fails,
 And each offended Critic loudly rails;
 If bated Dulness, with a heavy mein,
 Reclin'd, at ease, sleeps o'er each labour'd scene;
 Let frowning Judgment false applause refuse,
 And pass its sentence on the trembling Muse.
 But when the piece, impartially survey'd,
 Is found, like pictures, mix'd with light and shade;
 When modest scenes licentious vice controul,
 And tender passions melt the feeling soul;
 Ill-fated love for which ZELIDA dies,
 May draw Compassion's drops from streaming eyes;
 And if her fortunes deep impression make,
 Excuse the Author for the Heroine's sake.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

The SULTAN.

ACHMET, the Vizier:

ARCHIBALD, generally call'd

SELIM.

HENRY, his Friend.

OFFICERS, GUARDS, EUNUCHS, PRISONERS, &c.

} TURKS.

} CHRISTIANS.

W O M E N.

ZELIDA, Daughter to the SULTAN.

PARTHENA, her Confident.

SCENES, *Armenia, and its Boundaries.*



Z E L I D A.

ACT I. SCENE I.

*The Christian Camp.**Enter Selim.*

Selim. **S**WIFT as the plumes of Fancy, envenom'd
 Evils wing. One moment view'd the mind in
 Halcyon ease, the next beheld it wear
 The chains of love. But, lo! a champion
 Of the sacred cause steals thro' the gloom of
 Night. Say, who thou art, that wand'rest thro' these
 Solitary shades, while other mortals
 Court their soft repose.

Enter Henry.

Henry. Pardon, great Sir,
 A friend's officious zeal, that thus intrudes
 Upon your private hours,—hours which
 The Goddess Nature doom'd to rest, to fit the
 Soldier for to-morrow's dawn, and edge the blunted
 Soul for deeds of war.

Selim. Then will Aurora
View th' impending blow, and Fate, with all its
Dreary horrors arm'd, stalk in the sickly
Air: either the potent patron we adore
Smiles on his pious sons, or liberty's
No more.

Henry. To him, that just disposer of
Events, I bow a lowly vassal. If
Bright success beams on the Christian arms
Our laurels ne'er can wither, But if we fail,
The glorious cause that first inspir'd my
Breast, will somewhat ease the weight of shameful
Bonds.

Selim. By Heav'n! a Godlike thought, above the
Soul of Greek, or Roman Chief: but know,
Exalted youth, however Chance shall throw
Her random die, thy friend's a wretch for
Ever.

Henry. Recall that impious word. And to
The centre of Lethean stream plunge ev'ry
Gloomy care.

Selim. It will not be. The feather'd
Tyrant storm'd the citadel of Life, and
Waves his bloody banners. I feel the heavy
Force of rude controul. Check not the tear of
Pity, noble youth, for sweet Compassion's
Near akin to Love.

Henry. Thy words untune the
Music of my soul. Child of affliction
Speak the tale of grief. Ye rougher passions
Down: be hush'd ye winds, ye waters cease to
Roar: all but attention silent as
The tomb: be dead each thought but what thy
Sorrow brings, to light the gentle flame of
Soft concern.

Selim. Sweet sympathetic proof of
Gen'rous

Gen'rous mind, be still the friend, and share a
 Lover's pangs. Passing one fatal moment
 Thro' the vale, where the small current of a
 Crystal stream, meand'ring, glides along, I,
 Somewhat languid, sought for needful ease, and
 On the moss-clad fountain begg'd sleep's refreshing
 Dew. But soon was roused by a dismal
 Cry, whose echo seem'd to burst the passing
 Clouds. I posted on the wings of thought,
 Knowing distress exacted present aid
 From ev'ry soldier's hand. And what from that
 Curst æra takes its date, these wat'ry drops declare.

Henry. Take consolation, sir; perchance your
 Fortune ripens in the womb of time
 And you may still be blest.

Selim. Yet hear me farther,
 Thou wilt frankly own this breast shall ne'er
 Embrace its wonted calm, since dire reflection
 Lives to probe the wound. I found a virgin
 Hemm'd on ev'ry side by Virtue's sharpest
 Foes, and had I paid the debt of Nature
 There, the stroke had then been welcome.

Henry. How 'scap'd
 My friend the force of lawless rage?

Selim. Ev'n by
 My evil Genius, or some blind Dæmon
 That preserv'd my life, to suffer future
 Ills. The trusty partners of this hateful
 War watch'd my unguarded steps, and snatch'd
 Me, panting, from the whirl of battle. High
 O'er the bloody scene the fair one stood,
 And grateful tribute pay'd to rescue's hand.
 But when she spoke—grateful as voice of melody
 Divine was each harmonious sound. I,
 With unbounded transport's eye, gaz'd till
 My freedom vanish'd as a shade. I can
 No more!

Henry. Thy sighs inform the rest, and that
Pale look must spare thy tongue the pains, and speak
The poignant grief.

Selim. Only this bracelet faintly
Feeds the dying embers of a soothing hope,
Which, till this present moment, 'scap'd my thought.
On this one cast my all's for ever set.
If 'tis too much, ye pow'rs, that I to-morrow's
Fate survive, to love, may some envenom'd
Arrow drink my blood.

Henry. Retire, great sir, the
Down of rest may lull your busy care, and
Heal disquiet's fore.

Selim. Oh! never, never. My
Heart is lost in sorrow's winding maze, and
Ne'er can reach its home. Oh! Henry, her last
Words cleave to the center of my tortur'd
Soul,—oh! gen'rous youth, canst thou give conduct
To a hostile camp,—our prophet shall reward.
Thee; aye, and perhaps may deal his lib'ral
Gifts by my enervate hand.

Henry. Enough! The
Fulgid beams of day may gild thy darker
Thoughts. The din of war shall rouse the tyrant
Boy, and warm thy breast with far more manly
Fire.—Oh! Death, how many heroes shall to-
Morrow fall to glut thy savage altar. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *The Armenian Council.*

Sultan, Achmet, &c.

Sultan. Thou faithful Achmet, whose sage experience
Rules our midnight council, under whose fostering
Care Armenia sends her brown embattl'd
Sons, be seen thy Godlike self. To thee our
Prophet

Prophet trusts his holy cause. For thee the
 Gentle gales of fervent vows ascend
 The walls of paradise. This day Bellona
 Claims the mighty prowess of her hero's sword.
 Once but deserve her smiles, vict'ry presents
 Th' unfulfilled crown of fame, and binds
 Thy brow with wreaths for ever green.

Achmet. Danger

In ev'ry form I've oft encounter'd, and
 Made my court to Death, like some coy mistress,
 In the field of war. Haste then, oh! valour,
 From the sable vail of foul suspect.

Sultan. Peace!

Achmet, peace! let not thy subtle virtue
 Take alarm. Thou, like a precious metal,
 Well refin'd, hast past a fiery
 Trial of thy worth; but if, in times like
 These, thy anxious master strives to kindle
 Ardour in heroic minds, the righteous
 Task befits a Sultan well.

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Thou glorious ray
 Of ne'er declining light, slave to thy
 Pow'r, and uncontroul'd desire, I bring
 Th' important summons. These active Christians,
 Wedg'd in firm array, break thro' the glade
 Of yonder leafy wood, and brave our
 Prophet's vengeance. By expeditious
 March they've gain'd the plain, (for so our trusty
 Spies have now inform'd) and wait the coming
 Charge.

Achmet. Now! by yon' fretted dome I loudly
 Swear, their noble daring claims the praise of
 Foes.—Let's haste to meet 'em. My soul rejects

The

The hand of dire restraint, and ev'ry latent
Seed of fortitude is warm'd by Glory's
Sun.—But, oh! Zelida——

Sultan. Speak not, I
Charge thee, Achmet, on thy life, or speak in
Whispers, this thy plaintive love, least ev'ry
Heart shou'd catch the soft infection, and
Quite forget the bloody task of war.

Achmet. Sir,
To be dumb in such a cause exceeds all
Pow'r that Heav'n allots to man; but if my
Froward tongue betrays one thought to shock my
Master's peace, may I fall early in the
Arms of Death, and ne'er again offend.

Sultan. Rise!
Like thy growing fame, thou second Lord, in
Proud Armenia's realm; the present hour
Invites thee to the field, and ev'ry moment
Chides thy long delay. Think not thy grateful
Monarch shall neglect to crown thy martial
Feats. Our lavish'd bounties, with unsparing
Hand, greet thy triumphant banners.

Achmet. Thus! from
A heart as lowly as my knee, I pour [kneels.
The grateful torrent.

Sultan. Fly then to join the hardy
Sons of arms, for, hark! the welcome music {trumpets
Of the field proclaims the onset near. Here {sound.
Break we off. Soon as the silver dawn
Of soothing peace beams on our rugged clime
The morrow's sun beholds Zelida thine.

Achmet. Swift as an arrow from the bended bow
I fly to execute the Sultan's will. [Exit.

Sultan. 'Tis spoke! Nought but celestial beings
Merit more. E'en now, perchance, his brave
Illustrious deeds acquire a recent praise.—

I feel

Z E L I D A.

11

I feel affection for the godlike
Youth. A soft emotion riseth in my
Soul, which, something tells me, is a crime to quell.
[Exit.

SCENE III. *An inward Apartment in the Sultan's Palace.*

Enter Zelida and Parthena.

Parthena. Oh! my Zelida! Oh! my Royal Mistress,
Why wears that lovely face the veil of
Tears. True innate greatness of a noble
Mind riseth superior to a world
Of woe, and scorns its feeble rage.

Zelida. True, my
Parthena, royal souls, like mine, warm with
The sparks of pure ætherial fire, shou'd shrink
At guilt alone, and dread no other foe.
But sure the weakness of our timid sex
Smooths error's rigid brow. A long descent
From Eastern Rulers trac'd, Armenia's
Princess born for Sovereign Rule, thou'd thirst
Alone for universal sway. But sure
The nature of thy wretched friend betrays
The woman in her wounded breast, too
Blindly partial to the voice of Love. [coast,

Parthena. Dash not thy bark on that unhallow'd
Least thou, forlorn, like some poor shipwreck'd wretch
Who ne'er shall taste the food of comfort more,
Art doom'd a prey to ruin.

Zelida. Why let it
Come! let the fond Syren spread her magic
Spells, Zelida's well prepar'd to brave them
All! Nay, ruin wears a pleasing crown of
Charms, since 'tis array'd by him.

Parthena.

Parthena. How canst
 Thou sooth delusive fancy thus; mistake
 The fleeting shade for solid joy,
 And varnish o'er destruction? shall that great
 Soul which Heav'n for empire form'd, leaving
 Its native grandeur, embrace the passion
 Of a silly swain, and fall a victim
 To inglorious love?

Zelida. Alas! Parthena,
 Thou poor silly maid, believ'st the conquest
 Of a stubborn heart, an easy task
 Perform'd. No! The resistless fury
 Triumphs here, and swells in large domain;
 Lives in the current of our vital stream,
 And ev'ry beating pulse declares its pow'r.

Parthena. Madam, consider.--Friendship urgeth home,
 And lends a freedom to Parthena's tongue.
 Oh! I conjure thee, thou unhappy fair,
 By ev'ry racking pang this bosom feels,
 Abjure that fatal flame, fatal to
 Honour, life, and Turkish law.—Religion's
 Fix'd an adamant bar to blast
 Each budding hope.

Zelida. Why shou'd the
 Vot'ries of one common Lord, with Zeal's
 Inhuman wrath, dispute the sev'ral paths
 That lead to bliss, since ev'ry sacred tract,
 Pursu'd with strict integrity of life,
 Perhaps attains its bounds. But know, mistaken
 Girl, tho' in the days of my unripen'd youth,
 I bent my knee as our forefathers did,
 Yielding submission to a dotard
 Priest. Zelida's now a Christian.

Parthena. A
 Christian! say'st thou? When shall I call my
 Scatter'd spirits home, lost in a cloud

Of wonder? say, fair Apostate, oh! say
The efficient cause that wrought this sudden
Change.

Zelida. Cease to admire, and what thy wishes
Ask, receive from me. But ne'er these lips had
Told the sacred story of my vow
Did I not find a cordial friend in
Thee / one, who by ways peculiar to
Herself augments the joy of prosp'rous hours
(If any such attend a wretch like me)
And lightens ev'ry care.

Parthena. Madam, you over-
Rate Parthena's worth,—but, tho 'tis little,—
Here she offers all; devotes her service
To the royal maid she loves; nay, more!
Her peace, and life itself, with whatsoever
Else is valued dear.

Zelida. Hear then a tale
With frank confession told.—A pious
Matron of Venetian race, whose woes,
Unnumber'd as Arabian sands, wou'd,
In recital, draw compassion's tear,
And melt a list'ning Tartar's stubborn
Heart, mov'd from Circassia in my mother's
Train, mix'd in the vulgar herd of slaves.

In every look distinction stamp'd its
Seal to mark her truly noble. Her
Wither'd limbs, oppress'd with galling chains,
Feebly sustain'd their weight. Yet her fix'd soul,
On its foundation firm, was still
Unconquer'd. Fortune had made its efforts
There in vain.

Parthena. Sure! 'tis a sight that charms
Celestial pow'rs, when innate merit
Triumphs o'er affliction.

Zelida. Touch'd with
The nicest feelings of our sex, I begg'd
To

To share her grief. Eas'd the unhappy
 Captive's bonds, and stifled ev'ry groan. From
 Her the force of energy divine, darted
 Its warmest rays. The various suff'rings
 Of a righteous Lord, whose unexampled
 Piety and love atton'd for human
 Guilt, challeng'd each latent pow'r. By her
 Inspir'd, I boldly mov'd in Virtue's choicest
 Road, with undissembled faith.

Parthena. But shou'd the
 Sultan learn this wond'rous truth, this Inno-
 vation of a royal mind, where stands
 The hope of Empire?

Zelida. Here let it fall,
 And perish with the thought. Oh! wretched
 Royalty, thou pois'nous weed of dire
 Ambition's soil, how many rising
 Flowers, fraught with the vernal sweets, thy
 Rancour hath destroy'd.

Parthena. Madam, I tremble.—

Zelida. Give me thy fears, drest in the blackest garb
 Of horror, resign'd to fate, I'll view its chearless
 Hue. Ah! let the Sultan, with despotic
 Sway, drive me an outcast o'er the spacious
 Globe, when baneful Sirius holds his fiery
 Rule; or, let me, banish'd from the race of
 Man, wander thro' Lybian plains, or
 Zembla's snow. Wan with corroding grief,
 And pale with care, the pitying brutes
 May lose their savage nature, and silently
 Partake Zelida's woe.

Parthena. Madam, the
 Terror of the Sultan's power's not half
 So dreadful as the Vizier's love.

Zelida. Oh!
 Name not him and love. Two names which Heaven
 Ne'er

Ne'er ordain'd to join. Let us not thus, with
 Sorrow premature, anticipate our
 Evils. Death may release me, ere that
 Horrid hour. Or if I drag this gloomy being
 On, perchance the grand Original of all,
 Who aids his children in the day of need;
 May, in compassion to Zelida's tears,
 By unexpected measures yield relief. *[Exeunt.]*

A C T II. S C E N E I.

The Sultan's Palace.

Enter Sultan.

Sultan. **E**RE this the business of the field is o'er.—
 A crimson deluge of unholy blood
 O'erflows the dusty plain, and unbelievers
 Bow their vanquish'd heads, or ev'ry saint
 In Paradise bewails Armenia's
 Hapless doom.

Enter Officer.

Officer. Sultan of this our oriental
 World, our Prophet's great Vicegerent here
 Below, I bring thee tidings of diffusive
 Joy to chase Despondence, and its dreary
 Train, and raise each drooping thought.

Sultan. Soldier!
 Say on, for gladness wantons on thy
 Ruddy brow, and every spirit, dancing
 In thy eye, seems welcome prelude to the
 Tale thou bear'st.

Officer.

Officer. Then we have conquer'd.

Sultan. Eternal
Praise, oh! Mahomet, be thine! Ye powers
Angelic tune your golden harps, and sing
Melodious Pæans?—But, does the
Vizier live; or hath the savage monster
Death, that blasts the fairest blossoms of
Renown, envy'd his tow'ring fame.

Officer. Sir, he
Survives, and, by his actions, well
Deserveth life. He comes with glorious
Wreaths adorn'd, not to receive the homage
Of a crowd, but rather share their freedom.

Sultan. Prepare the glad some instruments of war.
Echo abroad the valour of the Chief.
The meanest soldier in the Turkish band
Demands our warmest thanks. Oh! Fortune, [*Ex. Off.*
Thou well repay'st me now for all my
Sorrows; be but propitious one
Succeeding moon, then fail me if thou canst.

Enter Zelida.

Zelida. Oh! regal source, from whence Zelida draws
Her vital streams, be this the whitest hour
In Life's fair day. Now graceful Conquest spreads
Her silver train, and hails her happy
Children. The joyous prospect of a
Lasting peace is every soldier's friend.
The plain of plenty spreads its ripen'd sweets,
And yields its yellow harvest to our hands.
No more the rough invaders pierce the wide
Vault of heav'n with loud alarms, nor shock the
Quiet of Armenia's realm.

Sultan. Daughter, approach!—
Yet nearer still!—Receive in this embrace

The

The fondest token of parental love,
And since the spreading wings of long-fought ease
O'ershade our harrass'd state, join with a father
Common to you both, to plan its future good.

Zelida. It rests on you alone, nor e'er demands
A feeble virgin's aid. Yet shou'd our prophet,
In a day of wrath, visit, with peals indignant,
This our land, Zelida gladly wou'd
Atone for all. Arming her breast to meet
The shafts of vengeance, she'd bless the awful
Hand that dealt the welcome blow, sink to her
Rest, and bid the world farewell.

Sultan. Thou tender
Pledge of nuptial vow, no more! The blessed
Spirits from the starry dome applaud thy
Matchless virtue. Live to enjoy the crown
Thy father wears, and with it all his honours.
But ere I mellow in a good old age,
And near advance the final line of life,
Wou'd see a future Sultan spring from thee,
Under whose placid sway succeeding times
Shall hail their gentle Lord.

Zelida. What means my
Father?

Sultan. The surest welfare of a darling
Child, not dear alone by Nature's holy
Bond, but dear unto me by a nobler
Union, firmly allied in Virtue.
The Vizier Achmet, of unblemish'd
Mind, who draws perfection from thy fair
Example, shall vow the passion
Of enraptur'd love. Blest with the brightest beams
Of warlike fame, the victor enters with
Surrounding friends, and lays his laurels at
Zelida's feet.

Zelida. Achmet I honour as

B

The

The Sultan's Chief, in the full noon of glory.
 Oh! may his bays, like every vernal mead,
 Appear in lively hue, and may his name,
 White as the maiden snow from bleaching clouds,
 Scorn envy's feeble dart.—May he be
 Happy with some other bride, and amply
 Blest in soft endearment's charms, foretaste
 His heaven, and ev'ry joy divine.

Sultan. Blind to the good that
 Courts thee, thou blast'st the tender purpose of
 My soul: When I entreat to raise thee to
 Renown, shall mere perverseness cancel
 Thy consent. I who have rear'd thee like an
 Infant plant, screen'd thy defenceless youth from
 Every wile, and daily taught thee how to
 Govern well, am ill repay'd for such
 Parental care. No longer order rules
 The common weal, or holds in tranquil state
 Its social sons, where filial
 Disobedience moves with gigantic step.

Zelida. Distract me not with such heart-piercing words:
 Fix, fix thy poniard in my spotless breast,
 The wound will seem less dreadful! Shall
 I forget the boundless debt I owe?

Sultan. Oh! never may'st thou. Let all the mother
 Live, and shine in thee. A meek compliance
 With affection sweet, grac'd the illustrious
 Matron.

Zelida. [*Aside.*] Oh! pow'r supreme, direct me,
 thou primal
 Source of thought, assist Zelida in this doubtful
 Hour!

Sultan. Why meditates my child?

Zelida. Because contending
 Passions war within, and struggle for
 The sway. I have a heart, humbly attentive

To

To the call of duty, but must not fall
Its victim. Cou'dst thou behold my agonizing
Thoughts; the poignant tortures of my lab'ring
Soul, thou woud'st in pity take me to thy
Breast, and strive to charm my sorrows to repose.

Enter Officer.

Officer. Sultan! thou darling fav'rite of the sky,
The noble Vizier, near the palace gate,
In grand procession moves, and begs by
Me, the servant of his will, to pay his
Duty at your royal feet.

Sultan. Let him approach
These wide extended arms, and taste the
Welcome which his merit claims. But thou [*to Zelida*].
Ungrateful girl, who ill repay'st the
Fondness of a fire, must quickly reach thy
Tongue another tale. A few succeeding
Hours I give thee to reflect. Improve each
Precious moment of the time. Instruct
Thy stubborn heart to own a Lord, enrich'd
By mental dignity and worth; who with
Just right hereafter rules the realm by wedding thee;
Or here I swear by his tremendous name
Who deals his thunder to the frightened world, I'll
Henceforth 'rase each soft impression from my breast,
And cast thee off an alien to my blood. [*Exit.*]

Zelida. Whither, undone Zelida, wilt thou fly,
To shun an angry father's madding rage.
No ray of comfort cheers my dreary soul,
But all within's a chaos! Perhaps my
Love, the fairest product of unerring
Nature, is wrung with massy chains. Perhaps
He's fall'n beneath the reeking steel, cover'd
With gaping wounds. The Sultan too, by

Headstrong passion blind, may drag this
Trembling frame to Achmet's loath'd embrace.
Distraction hovers round on every side,
And intercepteth every happy view. [weeps.

Enter Parthena.

Parthena. What plaintive sounds alarm Parthena's ear
With Sorrow's rueful voice, Alas? my friend
In tears!

Zelida. In tears indeed! By them I fondly
Try to ease my anguish, and calm the troubles
Of a care-worn heart. But Fate, that ne'er
Retracts its own decree, seems to deride
Zelida's vain attempt. Was ever virgin's
Hapless state like mine. Deny'd to hide me
From the prying world, and brood in pining
Silence o'er my grief, since I am royal born.
Oh! had the stars ordain'd thy luckless friend,
The homely daughter of some simple swain,
She'd feel a lighter pressure of her ills,
In the retreat of unfrequented groves,
Join the young nightingale's complaining note,
And sing soft chorus to the tragic moan;
Or, on some river's pendent bank, sadly
Attend a story of distress, and swell
The shallow water with her tears.

Parthena. Do woes
Long-felt, increase as time rolls on, or doth
The canker of some new mishap feed on
The bloom of beauty?

Zelida. Collect each black
Idea thou canst frame, and if thou'lt learn
The horrors of my soul, dress up a
Phantom in the direst form, and call it
Achmet.

Parthena

Parthena. Flush'd with his late success, and
Firm supported by a numerous train
Of potent friends obsequious to his will,
Achmet indeed I fear.

Zelida. Thy dread is grounded
On a certain base, no earthly power is
Likely to dissolve. To day my father
Urg'd this harsh command. Daughter receive the
Victor as a man, decreed the kingdom's
Future lord, and thine: one who to after-
Ages may transmit, unspotted honour
Springing from a son, whom ev'ry faithful
Subject shall revere.

Parthena. And can Zelida
Lose her christian love in deep oblivion's
Stream, and wed the wretch whom most her soul
abhors?

Zelida. Sooner the lowly bramble shall o'ershoot
The tall cloud-piercing pine, or human hand
Arrest the shining stars, as in their spheres
They move. Oh, rather let me be for endless
Years expos'd to blasting winds, 'till cold
Contractive pinch'd me to a point, or scorch'd
By heat, 'till ev'ry nerve and pore, stretch'd to
The utmost limits of attraction,
Are quite prepar'd to burst. If heav'n, resolv'd
To scourge my ripe offences, should doom
Zelida to that lot severe, may the
Curst hour that views me Achmet's wife, behold
Me shrouded in the peaceful tomb.

Parthena. A sudden
Paleness overspreads your face, and faintness
Creeps on every languid limb. Madam, I
Pray retire. Lean on my arm. Sure the most faithful
Staff, on which e'er drooping royalty reclin'd.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The triumph of Achmet is introduced with musical instruments, acclamations &c.*

Achmet. Thanks, fellow soldiers, for this day's exploits,
Such as shew warriors something more than
Men, and make their fame immortal. Bound are
Our foreheads with ne'er-fading bays, and
Martial glory in a lambent flame
Plays on the prophet's standard. Let each who
Shares the honour of the field, hold this more
Sacred than his natal day. Let unrestrain'd
Festivity and mirth, reign in each loyal
Dwelling. But see, the Sultan comes, for whom
I oft endur'd the piercing midnight cold,
And all the sharp necessities of war :
And now shall deem one gracious smile an
Ample meed, for every labour past.

Enter Sultan, Lords, &c.

Sultan. Welcome thou pith of eminence and duty ;
The land deliver'd from our Christian foes
Hails her illustrious safeguard. Blow the
Shrill trumpets 'till the jocund air returns. [*A flourish.*
The pomp of military sound. Let ev'ry
Face that wears the very shadow of a
Frown be call'd our publick foe. For thee whose
Deeds make future times thy own, thy studious
Master finds a fit reward.

Achmet. Sultan, thou
Pow'rful Alha here below, I, like a
Suppliant at the starry throne, bow my
Obedient knee. O may the source of

Never-

Never-ceasing bliss, on whom alone, the
 Worthy can confide, pour down his choicest
 Blessings on thee. But oh, my gracious
 Master, stoop to hear the commendation of
 A noble foe.——A godlike youth by martial
 Zeal inspir'd, strode where the foremost of the
 Ranks engag'd.

Sultan. Achmet methinks thy tongue is
 Wond'rous rich, in praising Christian virtue,
 Above the little prejudice of men,
 Thou foster'st every rising plant
 On whatsoever distant soil it grows.

Achmet. Dread sir, he comes.

Enter Selim guarded.

Behold the man at
 Whom detraction droops her head, and
 Pallid envy sickens:——The troops of France
 All scatter'd o'er the plain, left us this god:
 Like heroe to subdue, slightly attended
 With a chosen band, and blush at shameful
 Conquest.

Sultan. Captive, thy name.

Selim. 'Tis lost. Nameless
 I'd be, when liberty's no more.

Sultan. Assuage
 The raging billows of despair,——The native
 Ardour of a generous soul, that spurs
 It on to triumph, bids it not only
 Spare the conquer'd foe, but honour vanquish'd
 Valour. Therefore the Sultan proffers ev'ry
 Grace, thy splendid virtues challenge.

Achmet. [*Aside.*] His
 Gloomy visage paints a man depress'd, but
 Not o'ercome by fortune's griping hands.

Selim. Think

Not for me alone, these sable weeds of
Sorrow cloath my brow. Alas, most courteous
Sir, I wail the crosses of my royal
Master, the princely, pious, Lewis.
When I look back on troops, unnumber'd in
The crimson field, whom their religion
With a tone divine, excited to the war;
Remembrance dire, (like rains descending on
The poppy's head) sinks me to earth, and bows
My spirit down. For me it matters not;
I but a worm, an atom of the globe,
Am undeserving of a moment's thought,
In such a mighty, pondrous scene of ruin.

Sultan. Henceforth we'll study to relieve thy care,
And gently smooth affliction's wrinkled brow.—
But say what station in the Gallic train
Thy blazon'd fame adorn'd.

Selim. Behold, kind victor,
Here a private knight: not France's subject,
But a bold ally, whom high ambition
On it's tow'ring plume, brought to these hostile
Plains. A few brave youths, the steady followers
Of my wayward fortune, I led embattel'd
To the rapid charge. Nobly those few
Maintain'd th' unequal fight, for liberty and fame,
When all the Gallic bands were disarray'd,
And fled like trembling deer. Perhaps those
Heroes of the western world, have pass'd the
Dreary goal of death, to that strange coast, where
Airy visions dwell.—And, oh, had I but
Shar'd their glorious fate.—But that alas,
My cruel stars deny'd,—and I'm reserv'd
For ignominious bonds.

Sultan. I by report,
Most noble youth, before admir'd thy
Fortitude of soul, but now revere the

Bright

Bright celestial flame, thy native worth
 Emits. Whate'er can mitigate the pangs,
 Thou feel'st, quickly demand, and make it all
 Thy own.—Achmet, thy master wou'd a tale impart,
 A tale fit only for the Vizier's ear.

[*Exeunt Sultan and Achmet.*]

Selim. Oh, that the horror of eternal night,
 Wou'd here extend it's gloomy sable shade.
 Thou dusky mansion of puissant death,
 Expressive emblem of this clouded mind,
 Whose dismal doors are always wide, to take
 The wretched in, soon shall I lay my
 Heavy burthen down, in thy extensive
 Walls, where darkness reigns, and shake off hateful
 life.

[*Exit.*]

A C T III. S C E N E I.

Scene a Field near the Palace.

Enter Achmet.

Achmet. **U**nder the covert of a spreading tree
 I'll rest my weary limbs. Hither the dear
 Inspirer of my soul directs her nimble
 Steps.—A fair intent to succour the
 Distress'd, and stop the gushing torrents of
 The eye, bestows the pinion of uncommon
 Speed. But see, she comes, whom nature's lavish
 Hand has deck'd with every shining grace.

Enter Zelida.

Princess! thou lucid mirror of delight,
 Behold thy prostrate slave.

Zelida.

Zelida. Such servile
Adulation ill becomes the man, whose sword
Has thin'd the ranks of christian foes, [*aside*] ay,
And perhaps by one detested blow
Wounded Zelida in the tenderest part.

Achmet. Call it not adulation, charming maid,
But tune the musick of thy voice divine,
And in harmonious numbers chaunt it love.

Zelida. Oh talk not thus. The gather'd storms
of grief
Beat thick upon me.

Achmet. I swear it must not
Be. By our tremendous Alha,—no—sorrow
Destroying each angelic smile, is surely
Beauty's bane. But thou art lovely, even
In thy woe: clear up the gloomy orb of
Clouds, and let the wond'rous fun of thy
Perfection shine in meridian splendour:
Here will I breath so soft a gale of sighs
As shall dissolve thy icy heart, and thaw
Each frozen sense.

Zelida. Achmet forbear, nor tempt
A danger fatal to mankind. What num'rous
Ills have lovers not sustain'd. Turn o'er th'
Historic page with heedful eye, annals
Declare the dire effects of rash ungovern'd
Love. The tragic theme of many a
Midnight bard, proves this assertion true.

Achmet. Oh, cease to blame with that enchanting
face
The rosy passion thou wast form'd to raise.
E'en now my bosom feels, the sharp, new-pointed
Dart of piercing love: a thousand pleasing
Fires glide thro' my viens, and when I gaze on
Thee, I'm all immortal.

Zelida. Doth conquest make
Thee

Thee arrogant and vain? Must I put off
The softness of my sex, and tell thee, Achmet,
In a voice of thunder, thy hope's too
Proudly plum'd.

Achmet. Princess, parental sanction
Makes me bold. Elate with glory, and eternal
Fame, I enter'd here triumphant. Thy
Noble father, fraught with beneficence
And royal grace, bid me propose reward
For all my toil, and 'midst the blessings of
The spacious globe, had all collected
Lain before my feet, what cou'd I chuse but thee?

Zelida. Vizier, a fire's command indeed, may
Filial duty claim, where soft affections
Do not intervene. Nature bequeaths a
Parent large domain, but still the limits
Right. Perhaps repulse may whet thy cruel
Subtilty of malice, and light the Sultan's
Blaze of foul revenge. Chains may confine
Zelida's trembling joints, and bow her bended body
down;

But know, the soul beholds constraint with scorn,
And at her will eludes unhallow'd pow'r.

Achmet. Madam, alas! I bleed to see you thus!
The sight distorts me on a thousand wheels.
Unskill'd in little niceties of love
I sigh'd my honest vows. And if a rough
Unvarnish'd soldier's tale ruffled that
Angel form, here in a suppliant posture
I implore at Alha's burnish'd throne
Unnumber'd hours of smiling soft content,
And ev'ry tranquil joy that heav'n bestows.

Zelida. Thy prayers are surely heard, and heav'n
makes thee
Th' accomplice of its good. Fly! fly my presence!
Wed some other maid ere the declining

Sunshall tinge yon' western wave. Oh! grant me this,
Then shall the gentle breath of dear repose
Light on my sicken'd soul, and health of mind
In all its vigour shine.

Acbmet. The very tongue
That speaks its wish forbids. Sooner command
Me to attack, unarm'd, a band infernal
Of the blackest fiends, or twist the snakes
From fabled furies hair, than yield these
Holy feelings of the soul, and root the
Passion from my bloody heart.

Zelida. Desist
From this thy foolish firm resolve. But speak the
Tender purpose of thy soul to one whose
Heart susceptible of the flame, may yield
A mete return. I'd strain each pow'r to serve
The Sultan's Chief, but if I sacrifice
To others bliss, can ne'er consent to make
My heart the victim. Be early wise. Let
Each disaster your own folly caus'd,—your
Own discretion cure. [Exit.

Acbmet. And it is thus she
Rates her father's friend.—Are all the sobbings
Of a feeling bosom repay'd with cold
Disdain? From what vast heights we sanguine
Lovers fall. The feather'd prospects of a
Fair success lift us, in bright idea,
To the stars,—when soon the random hand of
Some unlook'd for chance strike us to gloomy
Caverns of despair, and crushes ev'ry hope. [Exit.

SCENE II. *A Mart at a Distance.*

Enter Selim and Henry.

Henry. To you, my friend, your Henry stands indebted
For this small share of freedom. A heart-felt
Freedom

Freedom, welcome still far more—since 'tis
Obtain'd by you.

Selim. 'Tis true to thee ill fortune's
Pressure feels more light, and thou retain'st
Only the name of bondage. For me the
Thicken'd clouds of fell dismay shut up the
Gloomy prospect. The soul enthrall'd deploras
Her wretched state, yet cannot break her chain.
Oh! love, how quick thy winged light'nings fly,
And, as descriptive poets oft declare,
Have done more mischief in this noisy world
Than all the bolts of Jove.

Henry. Hope, the best friend
Of Sorrow's drooping children

Selim. Talk not of
Hope. Sooner endeavour, with assiduous
Care, to view the smallest planet in the
Sky, when wings of darkness hover o'er the
Land, then sooth affliction with a poor
Device, or with a flattering accent
Whisper peace. Where shall I find that
Gem of womankind, whom Fate's rude hand
Forc'd from these doleful eyes.

Henry. Repine no more,
Nor let th' insatiate appetite of grief prey on
Your much-lov'd life. Whoe'er beneath oppression's
Burthen sinks, richly deserves its weight.
Fortune is never mistress to the wise,
But rather deem'd a vassal. But, soft! a
Lady of exalted mein glides o'er the
Verdant plain.

Selim. Methinks she bears the signet
On her brow of no small rank in fair
Armenia's realm.

Enter

Z E L I D A.

Enter Parthena.

Parthena. Instruct me, youths, where I
Shall the find the man, on whom the Sultan for
His noble nature bestow'd the name of
Selim.

Selim. Behold the wretch, whose name and
Freedom wr e together lost, but now for
Mere distinction's sake answers to that
You mention.

Parthena. Heaven, that yields protection
To the good, sheds its mild balmy dew on
Thy regarded head.

Selim. And is there comfort
Left for one like me?

Parthena. Believe a friend who
Bids thee not despond, a maid who call'd a
Bracelet once her own, but since bestow'd it
On a courteous Knight, sends me the pledge
Of better days in store.

Selim. Welcome as breaking
Beams of new-born light, thou bright celestial
Harbinger of joy. Now is the recompence
Of every ill, crown'd with o'erflowing measure.
No longer fortune shews her ghastly frown,
But bliss and I, like two long-parted mates, shall
Surely meet again.

Henry. [*interposing.*] What sudden transformation
Greets my eyes!

Parthena. A truce with wonder. Tho' the
Deed is strange, a few short hours may draw the
Mythic veil. Selim, this path conducts thee
To the altar, where all thy vows are due.

[*Exit Selim and Parthena.*]

Henry. A few short hours!—oh! thou mistaken fair,
Sure ev'ry moment of, uncertain fate

Creeps

Creeps with a cripple's pace. But yet the dawn
Of near approaching good spreads on my
Raptur'd view. A pleasing something whispers
To my soul, no mischief lurks beneath a form
So lovely. I'll now retreat, and bow
Obedient to whatever chance the
Universal fire of man ordains. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III. A Pavilion.

Enter Zelida veild.

Zelida. Affection, nurse of elegant desire,
Thou soft invader of the human breast,
Where wilt thou lead an unexperient maid?
Wilt thou, ingrate, spurn Duty's sacred law,
For sake thy father, country, and thy throne,
To live an alien in a foreign clime?
Hence, hence distracting thoughts. Let me behold
The noblest work creation e'er could boast.
For him I'll venture all. Oh! Love, how
Powerful are thy fires, that thus can
Warm a feeble virgin's breast. E'en now I
Feel a sudden flash of thy ethereal
Light, and I'll attempt, in this most virtuous
Cause, whate'er unwounded innocence defends.

*Enter Parthena, whispers Zelida, then exit, and
enters with Selim.*

Parthena. Madam, the godlike Selim.
Zelida. Exalted
Champion, whose extended arm snatch'd me
From terrors of impending fate, at sight
Of thee the tributary tear steals down
My maiden cheek. The noble impulse of

A feel-

A feeling soul bursts from the narrow
Limit of restraint, and will have speedy way.

Selim. Madam, the view of beauty in distress,
A grand incitement to a martial mind,
Claims ev'ry honest sword. Like to the warmth
The rosey god inspires, it calleth ev'ry
Wand'ring spirit home, and to one object
Rivets each desire.

Zelida. Alas! thou speak'st with
Sympathetic voice, as tho' a quick sensation
Mov'd thy throbbing heart, and lent description
Aid. Hast thou relinquish'd some enamour'd
Spouse, or left a Mistress in thy native
Land to render loss of freedom more bemoan'd?

Selim. Lady.—The torch of Hymen never light
Thy lowly slave to conjugal delight.
Ere I beheld Armenia's shore, my heart
Kept equal pace in each affair of love.
I saw the shining beauties of the west,
But ne'er paid adoration at their shrine.
To Turkish yoke I bow my stubborn neck,
And groan in double bondage. To blast each
Teeming hope,—the very name and rank the
Fair one bears, is in impenetrable darkness
Hid.

Zelida. [*aside*] Be still thou little trembler here
within,

Nor tinge my visage with thy scarlet dye.
Whilst I reveal the secret thou contain'st,
And ease thee of thy long-accustom'd weight.
[*To him.*] If her you prize, whom late report declares,
Her name and station both are envy's mark.—
Yet shou'd she stoop from royalty itself,
And with a timid modesty declare
Alternate passion of a kindred soul,
Wou'd'st thou forego thy country,—and the pow'r,

At

At whose bright fane thy bended knees unhinge,
Abjure the customs thy forefathers taught,
And live for her alone.

Selim. [*aside.*] Oh glorious fount of
Ever-cheering light, beam on this sudden
Chaos of my soul, and shape each new-
Created thought to reason. [*To her.*] Madam, my
Service owns itself your vassal, where pure
Religion doth not intervene. But shall I e'er
Deny Redemption's Lord, near that blest
Circle where he bled for me? No, as a martyr
Rather let me fall. He can sustain me in that
Trying hour, assuage the doleful agonies
Of death, and make its terrors smile.

Zelida. Misguided
Youth, methinks, you brave it well.

Selim. Alas!
Divinity's unspotted cause, requires
A nobler champion on it's side.

Zelida. Can't
Thou pretend to feel affection's force,
Yet slight it's object for a dotard priest.
Such incoherent tales, by Superstition's
Idle sons impos'd, start from sagacious
Reason's piercing eye, and quickly vanish
Like a sick man's dream. On swift determination
All depends.

Selim. Then 'tis decreed.—Dearly my
Spirits hang upon thy form. But yet
A higher principle than love, stronger
Than proud ambition of a prince,
Holds an eternal barrier between.

Zelida. If so resolv'd! Rase every soft idea
From thy breast, and court thy wayward fate.

Selim. Burst then, oh lab'ring heart,—Alas I
Cannot live exempt from love, and heav'n

Itself forbids th' obtaining terms. But know
The day that gives up Selim's vow, gives up
His hated life.

Zelida unveils.

Zelida. Transcendent youth ! thou well
Deservest heaven's choicest store, by strict
Observance of each law divine. Behold
The damsel rescu'd by thy arm, who
Greatly glories in an equal flame.
A flame more pure than fabled vestal fire.
Yet had'st thou yielded to unjust demands,
Which I to prove thy worth so lately made,
I had the mean oblation then disdain'd,
And cast thee off for ever.

Selim. What notes
Celestial charm my ravish'd ear.—Yet
Still speak on—for as I catch each falling
Sound, a heart-felt satisfaction dawns
Upon me, soft as the filken rose's
Op'ning bloom.—Thou bright sultana of my
Faithful bosom. —

Zelida. Selim, desist.—I claim
A moment's pause. I am Zelida, of
Unblemish'd race, the only heiress of
Armenia's realm.—Profest a christian too ;
But how converted to that faith elect,
The maid who gave thee conduct here
Shall tell.—But one thing more I beg—

Selim. What woud'st
Thou have. Thou hast my soul already.

Zelida. 'Tis instant succour in a dismal state.
The vizier Achmet, far renown'd in war,
Lov'd by my father, and our Turkish chiefs
Proudly expects Zelida's hand, in wedlock's
Sacred rite, and with her next succession

To

To the throne. Can'st thou avert the dire
Uplifted blow, by any honest wile?

Selim. Thus human happiness is ne'er compleat,
And while vain man prepares the luscious draught,
Some winged dæmon posting thro' the air
Dashes his cup with gall. Madam, I boast
A friend, to whom the secrets of this wounded
Breast, I've freely oft imparted. A steady
Bosom friend, in victory or chains. To him
I'll recommend our common cause. The noble
Henry shall consult with me; perhaps good
Angels pitying distress, may stop
Misfortune in it's swift career.

Zelida. Fain wou'd
I see, methinks, this wond'rous man.

Selim. You
Quickly shall.——But let not future ills engross
Our thought. Let those few moments now allow'd,
Be spent in modest ecstasy and love.

Zelida. Selim no more. The Sultan and his Vizier
Pass this way, near this appointed time.

Selim. And must
I then depart? —

Zelida. 'Tis meet you shou'd indeed
Farewell.

Selim. Tho' thousand daggers stab me in
Farewell, yet as a parting is our common
Good, I'll tear my eyes from thine.——But oh, my
Fair, each hour remit one tender sigh,
And I to thee will myriads more repay,
Which shall, with magic art, unknown to all
The world, create soft winds to waft themselves
To thee. Adieu, 'till fate ordains we meet again.

[Exit *Selim*.
Zelida retires into the pavillion.

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

*The Pavilion.**Enter Zelida.*

Zelida. **T**IS fix'd.—Where virtue and religion
 Intervene, let filial duty fall.
 'Tis true, I leave a fire.—Perhaps to grief.
 Yet all the natives of this eastern world
 Engage in constant war with Christian faith.
 Howe'er, I'll not resolve on sudden flight
 'Till each concurring circumstance of time
 Shall justify the deed. But, lo! the Sultan
 And his Minion come, and seem in busy
 Conf'rence. Here I'll retreat, and 'scape each prying eye.

Enter Sultan and Achmet.

Sultan. I claim thy disappointment for my own,
 At least a partial share.

Achmet. No!—By our Prophet,
 Never shall it be! Behold a wretch, singled
 By Fortune, for a load of sorrows. Here
 Let her blackest ministers discharge the
 Missile weapons of unconquer'd rage. Oh! fir,
 When mem'ry's magic wand charms up each past
 Idea to my view, methinks the cruel
 Excellence appears, clad in the terrors
 Of her awful beauty. Creative Fancy
 Paints her all in frowns, and bare imagination
 Wounds me more than all the woes I felt before I
 Lov'd.

Sultan.

Sultan. Can she thus ill requite desert
Like thine, yet hail the Sultan fire? I, deem'd
The hand of all-constraining Time, had bow'd
Her stubborn knees to duty's throne, 'till many a
Noted circumstance occur'd, in full
Conviction of thy slighted vow.

Achmet. Oh! had you
Heard the final doom from those disdainful
Lips, your heart to infant softness had
Dissolv'd, and pitied wretched Achmet's luckless fate.
Oh! cou'd these tears but quench the torch of love,—
A torch which fair Zelida's eyes illum'd;
Or might its bright communicative light,
Emit sharp-pointed beams to pierce that breast,
Now to a tender feeling senseless quite,
And all the horrid racks my soul endures.

Sultan. Dry up those flowing rivulets of grief.
If a paternal sway is found in ought,
Prevailing o'er the froward maid, your merit
Surely taxes all my pow'r. But if her
Wayward inclination still shall cross
The honest purpose of my soul, I'll leave
The wand'rer to the spacious globe, and ev'ry
Black calamity of life to which ill-fated
Wretches stand expos'd. Thou, for the trivial
Loss of one so mean, shalt mount, with some more
Worthy fair, Armenia's env'y'd throne.

Achmet. Curse the exchange 'twixt royalty and love!
Ah! rather see me perish here unpitied,
My death embitter'd too by all the keenest
Shafts of foul reproach. Whene'er my heart
Denies its primal vow, this steel shall pierce the
Lurking traitor home. But, mark! the maid on
Whom my lab'ring thoughts are all intent, this
Way directs her steps.

Sultan. Achmet, retire! the
C 3 Sequel

Sequel leave to thy fond master's care ; may
Heav'n befriend the cause of ardent love, and
Arm my tongue with all persuasive power.
I wou'd, on mildest terms, obtain consent,
Where all the pow'rs, both human and divine,
Will ratify command. But shou'd the proud
Ungrateful girl reject the gentle
Blessing I propose, deaf to the call
Of love and fair renown. —

Achmet. Why then remember
She's your daughter still. For tho' on her I
Doat,—to madness doat,—almost beyond the
Stretch of soaring thought,—yet may th' unhallow'd
Hand of rude constraint ne'er seize that tender
Frame. Whene'er affection in a soul
Refin'd, requires not a mutual return,
The marriage torch will lose its purer
Flame, and light to wanton joy. [*Exit.--Sultan retires.*]

Enter Zelida.

Zelida. In what

Perplexing labyrinth of thought will love
Entangle an unskilful maid. Shall I
Disclose the flame that warms my breast, and trust
The Sultan's mercy? Forbid it love, and
Every rosy form that fills his train.
That way despair, and wildest fury turn.
But, lo! the Sultan comes, and on his { *Sultan comes*
wretched } *forward.*

Daughter bends his indignant eyes. My soul
Is full of terror and dismay, and all
The woes this throbbing bosom feels, wou'd burst
The fleshy limits of restraint, did they
Not find relief in gushing tears.

Sultan. Why art thou drest
In sorrow's sad attire ?

Zelida.

Zelida. Because a beggar in
The world of bliss, — deny'd the smallest alms
Of cheering joy. Those drops that now bedew
My haggard cheek are sure the silent language
Of distress, and clearer paint the heart's
Tumultuous state, than all the pageant
Rhetoric of words.

Sultan. Away with sullen
Proofs of discontent! My breast shall kindle
Ardour in thy mind, and with the noble
Fire ambition lends, light thee to crowns
And ne'er declining glory.

Zelida. And shall Zelida,
With a trembling hand, grasp at the mimic
Shade of rosy peace? Greatness, I fear, is
Deem'd a Paradise alone, by dim short-
Sighted mortals. Thro' the false glasses of
High-crested pride, it seems ethereal
Ground. But near approach unveils illusion
To the naked view. The eye of sense perceives
The Fairy land, attracted only by
Magnetic air.

Sultan. Daughter! no more of these
Ungrateful sounds; the meer chimeras of a
Churlish priest. Exalt thy drooping thoughts
To empire's height. Achmet shall lead thee
To the nuptial fane, where dimpled beauty
Blusheth kind consent. Now, by our holy
Prophet, here I swear, the day that views thee
Meet the Vizier's wish, shall view thee partner
Of Armenia's throne. There unknown joys
Attend on sovereign rule, above the
Subject's narrow mind to feel.

Zelida. Why will
You urge your hapless daughter thus, to yield
Her hand where most her heart abhors. Impose

On

On duty the severest task in any
 Other cause. Command Zelida, straight to
 Fix abode, where loath'd disease, and meagre
 Famine dwell. Place her forlorn on unfrequented
 Land, where no kind friendly vessel deigns to
 Touch.—be herbs my food, some purling stream
 My draught,—my only comrades inoffensive
 Brutes,—This and much more I'll uncomplaining
 Bear, 'till death that moweth all distinction
 Down, shall gently lay me in the silent grave.

Sultan. Can'st thou, unmov'd, behold thy aged sire,
 (Whom day and night alternately declare
 Eagerly anxious for a daughter's weal)
 Pleading to make thee happy and ador'd?
 If thou art deaf to all I here can urge,
 Divest thy mind of philosophic cheat,
 Of self deceit, and specious argument;
 And let affection's gentle call, join'd
 With the noblest sound of fair renown,
 Allure Zelida.—

Zelida. Not to the Vizier's bed.
 Witness, ye blessed natives of the sky,
 With what reluctance poor Zelida sins.
 Tho' strongest motives force me to reject
 A tender father's will—yet nature
 Shudders at the painful deed.

Sultan. Art thou
 With disobedient folly charm'd?

Zelida. If to
 Detest the Vizier's loath'd embrace,
 Be planting weeds in folly's rankest soil,
 Wisdom and I are bitter foes indeed.

Sultan. Now thou hast charm'd my fury from
 its cell.
 No more it brooks the rein of mild restraint:
 To-morrow sees the crisis of thy fate.

Soon

Soon as Aurora teems with infant day
 The marriage rites attend. If stubborn
 Inclination then shall check, a bridegroom's
 Rising joy, these hands shall drag thee trembling
 To the shrine, and yield thee, spite of all thy
 Sex's wiles, a weeping victim to the
 God of love. [Exit.

Zelida. Yet stay, my father, — I conjure
 Thee stay; vouchsafe attention to a
 Hapless child. Alas, he's gone. Fled me like
 Baneful pestilence or death. Look down ye
 Guardian angels of the good, and with
 A moist compassionating eye, behold
 In me misfortune's elder born. But, see,
 The friend, whom most my soul approves, (who
 Reconciles me oft to wayward fate, and
 All the weight of sorrow, heav'n decrees) seeks
 The pavilion's shade.

Enter Parthena and Henry.

Parthena. Madam, the godlike
 Henry! —

Zelida. Welcome I'd bid to Selim's second-
 Self, did not such welcome, invitation
 Lend to flowing tears, and all the dreary
 Pangs of fell dismay.

Henry. Lady, the drops that
 Wet those beauteous cheeks, richer than pearly
 Dews that scent the lawn, unman, alas, my
 Stubborn soldier's heart, and wake each tender
 Feeling. Nay, when I gaze at such excess of
 Grief, that bursts a deluge from a lab'ring breast,
 A lenient, sweet sensation creeps upon
 Me, and inward melts me to a very woman. —
 Sure 'tis the voice of pity pleads within,

Quickly

Quickly to know the cause of all thy sorrow
And fly with eaglet-wing to search redress.

Zelida. Thanks, gen'rous Henry. But yet I fear thy
Fond officious care, is vainly here employ'd.
Mis'ry is sure the minister of fate
To guide Zelida to the gaping tomb,
Where joy and all it's golden comrades ne'er
Resort, but everlasting darkness reigns alone.

Henry. It ne'er shall be.—Let Selim's faithful friend
Snatch thee from all those gloomy terrors, that
Haunt thy wild distemper'd reason thus.
Sure fate wou'd stamp that hour with blackest curse,
Wherein so fair an innocence was lost ;
Sever'd from earth, and Selim's longing arms.
Oh, could you hear him sigh, as I have done ;
Then softly swear, and tenderly avow,
With each emotion of a feeling soul,
Zelida dear as virtue's brightest form,
You wou'd in pity make a truce with tears,
With modest aspect hear the soothing tale,
And live for him alone.

Partbena. Madam, behold
Him here. You seem in wild disorder. Call
To your instant aid each latent power,
And calm the rising anguish in your soul.

Enter Selim.

Exalted Selim, rightly welcome now ;
Behold the vernal flower of delight,
Bending to earth, and shedding all it's sweets.
Oh, let thy eyes exert their gentle beams,
Warming to new-born life with genial heat,
Nor e'er permit it, like a baleful weed,
To fade and perish in a chilly shade.

Selim. Where is the bud of ever blooming happiness ?
Oh,

Oh, let me fold perfection in my arms,
 To make me more than mortal. Thou fairest
 Source of all terrestrial bliss, thus while
 I clasp thee to my throbbing bosom, the fates
 Repay for each misfortune past. My ev'ry
 Faculty is full of thee, and drinks celestial
 Pleasure. Blest in thy dear society,
 The barren rock, or frigid, gloomy vale,
 Gay as elysian groves wou'd seem to smile,
 With nectar-streams, and ne'er decaying joy.

Zelida. Not the last trump, that summons all the dead,
 Can give more instant vigour, at it's sound, than
 Selim's grateful tongue. But I have news, (if
 E'er you held the poor Zelida dear, as
 Sure my heart suggests your vows were true)
 Wou'd like the frenzy of a moon-struck brain,
 Conjure distraction from her antic cave,
 And make thee rage with most transcendent fury.

Selim. Be brief, my fair.—Nor let suspense alarm
 My manhood thus. I'll laugh at each tempestuous
 Gust, oppression's wind can scatter o'er
 My head—may I but call thee mine; but if
 On thy excelling form, unfriendly planets
 Shine, I'll fall supine before the starry throne,
 And beg the ills, by heav'n design'd to urge
 Thy tender frame, may center here.

Zelida. Now you're
 Too kind. Howe'er my father dooms his
 Rueful daughter.—Whether to chains or
 Matrimonial curse; succeeding times
 Shall celebrate thy name, and flighted
 Virgins ne'er forget thy praise, due
 To unequall'd constancy and love.

Selim. Thy father's doom, and matrimonial curse/
 Place them in space, a thousand globe's asunder.
 There's surely more than magic in the sound.

Waft

Waft us, ye winds, to Caledonia's shore,
Where peace and harmony retain a seat,
And tranquil hours attend.

Zelida. There spoke, methinks,
The voice of prophecy, inspir'd by some
Unseen, preserver of the good. Gold, though
The bane, and deadly aconite of ev'ry
Clime, when us'd a tool to pow'r, and lawless
Men, reserves a happy quality within,
Where fair discretion woos. More than enough
My private hoards contain, to aid our flight,
And make retirement blest. And here, by pure
Seraphic flames I swear, I'd rather dye
The glorious Selim's wife, than live a
Monarch's bride, and rule the world.

Henry and Partbena. Permit
The partners of your private councils, to find
The necessary means of your escape, and
Follow all your fortunes.

Selim. Why now the measure of
Delight runs o'er. My father's mansion
With it's gracious arms, is well prepar'd to
Take th' unhappy in: There blest with innocence
And friendship's store, in days of ease, and nights
Of balmy slumber, we all may dwindle
In a good old age, 'till every spring of
Life forgets to move, and all her wheels stand still.
But oh, thy tender form can ill sustain, [*To Zelida.*]
The madding fury of the briny surge,
The tedious journey through——

Zelida. [*Interrupting*] Wreck me not
Thus: My heart's not proof against a shade of doubt.
Conduct me through th' inhospitable sands,
Where only hairy sylvans roam. Or near
The confines of the northern pole, where
Flaking ice, and lofty piles of snow, condense

The

The stiff'ning air. Aspiring love will make
 Zelida bold to follow Selim's steps.
 But now the tuneful bird on yonder spray
 Has rais'd her evening song. Adieu, till night
 Is clad in sable vest, and busy mortals
 Overcome with toil, are bound in pleasing
 Fetters of repose.

Parthena. Then on the hill where
 Yonder lambkins play, your trusty servants
 Wait. There is a lonely hermit's cell, where
 Lives a man unlike the human race. —

Henry. At which appointed spot we all will meet
 And bid farewell to proud Armenia's coast.

Selim. Parent of all, from whose clear stream our
 Brightest reason flows, direct our ways by
 Thy unerring light, inspire thy creatures
 With expedient means to fly this hateful
 Land, but if thy gracious will decrees
 Our fall, to glut the fierce, tyrannic rage
 Of men, let them in us behold unshaken souls,
 And how a mind resolv'd, dares meet it's fate.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Scene a Chamber in the Sultan's Palace.

The Sultan riseth from a Couch.

Sultan. **W**HAT, ho! — who waits without.

Enter Eunuch.

How wears the night.

Eunuch. Dread sir, the bear is turn'd the algid wane.

Sultan. Retire, and wait attentively my farther call.

[*Exit Eunuch.*]

Now midnight darkness overshades the globe,
 Bearing a near resemblance to my mind.
 The vulgar think me great, and therefore happy.
 Such are, alas, the faint, delusive
 Notions of unskilful men. To me this
 Gaudy palace seems a den, where sighs, and
 Very wretchedness preside. My stubborn
 Daughter frights the sleepy God, who shuns th'
 Unhappy monarch's thorny couch, and strews
 His drowsy poppies round a vassal's head.

Enter Eunuch.

Eunuch. Tremendous master, lo! great Achmet
 waits
 And humbly begs access. In every
 Feature wild disorder reigns. Conflicting
 Passions seem to struggle for the sway, and
 Rend the toiling soul.

Sultan. Let him then enter. [*Exit Eunuch.*]
 What mean these gloomy apprehensions here,
 Like ghastly sprites, that haunt the guilty mind,
 And plant eternal scorpions.

Enter Achmet.

My son,
 (For so I nominate thee now) smooth thy
 Contracted brow. The nuptial god attends
 With blazon'd torch, to usher in delight.
 On the soft pillow of Zelida's breast
 Reclin'd, in raptures of extatic bliss,
 Be every care forgotten.

Achmet. Talk not of
 Marriage, or a shade of joy. My fault'ring
 Tongue imparts a horrid tale, might make the
 Eldest

Eldest fiend of darkness howl.—But spare the
Cruel task, and learn it here. [*Delivers a letter.*]

Sultan. [*reads.*] 'Tis known the
Chief commander of the Night is by the
Princess brib'd, Zelida long abjur'd the
Turkish faith, and greatly glories in the
Christian laws. Selim her plighted Lord,
With chosen Friends, are now preparing for
The means of flight. Ere this arrives they reach
The hermit's cell, and clad in fit disguise
Direct their course to Caledonian plains.

Achmet. Oh! like a traitor had I been impal'd,
Sooner than felt the woe this hour unfolds.

Sultan. May furies seize the rest. Sure ev'ry
Word in this detested scrawl, was penn'd with
Venom drawn from foulest adders. But sorrow's
Burthen bears too hard upon me, and bends
My body in a green old age, down to the
Silent mansions of the dead. [*Swoons.*]

Achmet. Haste, haste
Ye vassals. Bring forth the richest cordials
Of the east, to give your master renovated
Life.—Sure fate has fix'd destruction's seal
Upon me, and all the minutes of the
Damn'd are mine. [*Enter Attendants.*]

Help me support afflicted
Royalty, and lift this weight of mis'ry
From the ground.

1st Attendant. See, he revives.

Achmet. Revives indeed—
To bear sharp torments in an earthly hell.
Tho' thoughts distracting tear my wretched bosom,
Loyalty claims pre-eminence, and joins
Her plaintive notes with sympathy divine,
To melt my manhood to a female softness.

Sultan. Why have you drawn me from oblivion

Thus

Thus, to view the hated light. To what great
Purpose is your zeal bestow'd; only to
Drive me back on Recollection, and wake
My thoughts to anarchy and madness.

Achmet. Tremendous Sultan.—

Sultan. Oh! speak not thus; such
Pagent title does but mock me now.
The blackest epithet that priests invent
When they denounce damnation to a
Callous wretch, is more adapted to my
Present state.—But ere the sparks of reason
Are extinct, I'll do a justice that becomes a
Monarch. Guards, on your lives, prepare the
Keenest instruments of pain. I'll feast my
Eyes with black, rebellious blood, and
Cheer each sense, with viewing treason's fall. *[Exit.*

Achmet. My own calamities I'll sooth awhile,
And give my sorrows to the wafting winds:
Yet thine, oh Sultan, shall be deep engrav'd,
In the retentive tablet of my heart. ———
I've seen the furious tempest of thy soul,
Lull'd by my breath, to softest halcyon calm.
Oh! gracious Alha, beam on my fair
Endeavours; Approve my faith and duty to
The ~~fire~~^{virtue}, nobly triumphant o'er the daughter's love.

SCENE II. *A bill near a Hermit's cave.*

Zelida. 'Ere this, methinks, we'd gain'd the steep
ascent,
Had not my fears betray'd a timid mind. ———
Yet chide me not. For oh, my lord, if once
My weakness shou'd provoke a frown, frantic,
I'd curse my very being, and wish I
Ne'er had liv'd, or not been lov'd.

Selim. Most perfect
Model

Model of the Cyprian dame, chafe dark
 Suspicion's shade. Am I not blest, far
 Beyond mortal thought? Art thou not all that
 Young desires can frame? Unnumber'd graces
 Play upon thy smiles, and bathe in liquid
 Chrystal of thy eyes. Each accent falling
 From thy rosy lips, is sweetly gentle
 As a zephyr's breeze, that fans the placid
 Bosom of the spring, and ev'ry sigh more
 Fragrant than the morn.

Zelida. Howe'er I am by
 Wary nature cast, mild satisfaction
 Joins our little train, since god-like Selim's mine.
 Oh! I will hide me in thy constant breast,
 The port wherein my anxious mind
 Rides safe: discharge the burthen of my
 Doating heart, and shew thee all it's feeling.
 But while I only gaze upon thee,
 Raptures in gushing floods pour thick upon me,
 And sounds are wanting to declare my gladness.

Selim. Thou brightest pattern of unshaken truth,
 Shou'd I not be an infidel in love
 To harbour doubts of thee; oh! thy emotions
 Fondly pair with mine. The fair, transparent
 Current of thy thoughts, flows in the channel
 Of seraphic joy, and thou surpassest
 All thy sex, in virtues most refin'd, and
 Purity of soul.

Zelida. Alas, my Lord, how
 All these melting passions, deceive our
 Groffer powers. While we in blind security
 Consume our precious time, my father's
 Soldiers from the outward walls, by Achmet's
 Stern command, may fall forth, and drawn
 In files by military skill, may bar
 Each promis'd avenue to flight.

Henry and Parthena disguised, enter hastily.

Henry. Fly, fly
My lord, on expedition's wing. From yonder
Eminence we late descry'd a dusty cloud,
Directing fast it's lofty circle hither;
Thro' which fierce gleams of gold in splendour pierce:
A shout of martial pomp has thrice been heard,
Which splits the welkin with it's cleaving din.

Zelida. There's not a word, escap'd those fatal lips,
But carries spotted pest, and each disease
That bears a strong antipathy to life.
My spirits fail.—Each spring relax'd, has lost
It's function now, and all the woman yields. [*Faints.*]

Parthena. Alas! she faints. The ruby colour's from
Her visage fled, that late was seated there.

Selim. Oh, best belov'd.—Oh, drooping excellence.
Erect those eyes that spoil mankind of day.
Let me arrest thy flying soul, and force
The flutt'ring captive to it's accustom'd
Cell. See—she looks up, and all celestial
Charms regain their throne: a thousand beauties
Overspread her face, and sport like Cupids
Round the Paphian queen.

Zelida. Now I awake
From sorrow's dismal trance, with all the
Horrors of a fearful sinner, who at the whips
Of conscience stands aghast. Like him I
Tremble at the Vizier's name. But thou,
My lord, art sure a sovereign balm for
Sharp misfortune's sore. Thus, thus encircled
In those trusty arms, where fresh elysian
Flowers spread their sweets, I scorn the influence
Of adverse stars, and all the malice of
Resistless fate.

Henry. Prudence, my friends, forbids
Our longer stay, for distant sounds alarm

My

My ears, and ev'ry minute's black with louder dread.

Selim. Let us then fly; and if o'ertaken by
The troops of guards, like a collected army
Stand the shock.—This hand enur'd to war. [*To Zelida.*
And daring deeds, shall fight, my fair, the cause
Of love and thee. But if o'ermatch'd by such
a Numerous odds, I fall disfigur'd with
A thousand wounds——

Zelida. Why then indeed, I shall
Not long survive. Disrob'd of flesh, all soul
I'll follow thee. Our love shall flourish, like
Ourselves immortal; and when thro' plains
Etherial we move, the candid spirits
Joyfully shall say—lo!—the most faithful
Pair, that ever enter'd in the realms above. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Sultan's palace.*

Enter Achmet.

'Ere this the soldiers by the Sultan sent
Have almost gain'd the sloping hill. Yes—thou
Fair fugitive, thou shalt yet be ta'en, and
Safe to virtue, country, and thyself
Remain, tho' to thy int'rest blind, and
Lost to me. I thank thee prophet, who hast
Arm'd my tongue with efficacious pow'r
To sooth my master to a gentle calm,
And ~~sooth~~ ^{all} the boist'rous whirlwind of his soul.—
But see he comes, involv'd in thought profound.

[*Retires.*

Enter Sultan.

Sultan. From me, succeeding times shall learn, that
Grandeur never is exempt from woe.
The life of man's a wilderness of ills,
Thro' which the ruler, and the peasant, drag

In winding maze, their weary, wandering steps.
 Exalted Achmet, sprung from the precious [*Seeing Ach.*
 Store of friendship's mine, now in the chilly
 Winter of my fortune, stick to my aged
 Sides, and kindly warm me with supplying heat.

Achmet. If amidst all the various plagues, that
 Fate can scatter with a baleful hand,
 I basely leave my Sultan, and my friend,
 May every pow'r to which my youth has bow'd,
 In the extremest need abandon me.

Sultan. Accept what thanks a grateful mind bestows.
 Oh! when the prospect of redress is past,
 A tender fellow feeling of affliction,
 Is the best cordial that a friend can offer,
 To ease sharp pangs, and heal our mental wounds.
 Ah me! what dismal groans,—Achmet, behold th'
 Aspiring man, who boldly ventur'd to confront
 Thy love. [*Selim is brought in.*]

Achmet. His brow's o'erspread with clammy dew
 Of death.

Selim. Here set me down. Let me pour
 Forth the fulness of my bosom, and sink
 Supinely to my lasting rest.

Sultan. How nature [*aside.*
 Pleads with all prevailing voice, and spite of
 Each resolve that steel'd my heart. dictates
 In sighs, Zelida is my child.—Say is
 My daughter number'd with the living, and
 Is she still unfullied?

Selim. Afflicted sire,
 Your wretched daughter liv'd, when my poor breast
 Receiv'd its fatal wound; and if the stars
 Had favour'd our designs, Scotland had view'd
 The tend'rest wife, that ever blest a happy
 Husband's arms; harmless in thought as female
 Turtle doves; pure and untainted as
 Descended snow, that lies unwarm'd on

Greenland's

Greenland's craggy hills.

Achmet. Dread sir, awhile
Avert those wretched eyes. A ghastly vision
Rising to my view, freezes the frigid
Current of my blood, and soon will turn me
To a lifeless statue. [*Zelida is brought in.*]

Zelida. Place me betwixt
My father, and my love; there wou'd I end
This melancholy being, and bid the
World adieu.

Selim. What means that deadly paleness
On thy cheek? Those swimming eyes, that us'd to
Dart the rosy beams of joy, are languid
Now, and all thy frame's with sharp convulsions
Torn.

Zelida. On dissolution's dreary verge
I stand.—When you was hurried from the
Scarlet field; the gallant Henry brav'd the
Guards alone. Under whose arm, the chilly
Executing spear of fate, reach'd my
Unhappy bosom.

Sultan. Let me shake off this
Lethargy accurst. Haste——call physicians;
Bring the choicest drugs, still to detain the
Flying breath, and keep in royal life.

Achmet. Can annals e'er record a day like this?

Zelida. Seek not, alas! to close this fleshy cage.
My active soul's already on the wing,
Nor can the artist, stopping ev'ry breach,
Close up the yielding passage to the sky.

Selim. Why truth as ever centers in thy words.
The lively spring of beauty's now no more,
The lillies wither, and the roses fade,
And death exulteth o'er those lips, where grace
Of speech, and soft persuasion hung.

Sultan. Look up,
Thou murder'd innocence. Her dying softness [*aside.*
Steals

Steals upon me, and melts my manhood into
Boyish tears.

Zelida. Father, the hand of death
Exerts its utmost force, to break the
Stubborn ligaments of life. Say—will you
Then forgive the excessive fondness of
A doating maid? Love, and adherence to
The Christian faith, urg'd us to luckless
Flight. Oh! let me hear remission's gentle
Voice. My fleeting ghost shall catch the falling
Sound, and bear the sweet expression to
The shades.

Sultan. Daughter, my heart bleeds equal drops
With thine, and every angry resolution's
Fled.—May all thy virtues, in their brightest
Garb, charm'd to the sky, by pure, angelic
Notes, before the sacred, and immortal
Throne in sweet memorial rise, and ev'ry
Imperfection of thy sex, in deep
Oblivion die. Such a forgiveness
As I now accord, and such alone, may
Heaven grant to me.

Zelida. Now I am blest
Indeed, and music charms me to my last
Repose.—Achmet, come hither.—When I am
Mingled with my kindred dust, judge me not
Too severely; but pond'rate each transaction
Of my life, in candour's lovely scale.
Selim, for thee I muster ev'ry vital pow'r,
And all my dying faculties are thine.
Prepare to join me with the choirs above,
In the bright regions of eternal day.
The golden landskip riseth to my view,
And love shall waft us to our final home.

Sultan. Insatiate tomb, how shall I envy thee
This beauteous form. Surely thy charms will
Vigour lend to death, and warm the frigid
Monster into life.

Zelida.

Zelida. Oh! my lov'd lord,
Joyfully as feather'd choiristers accost
The morn, after a chilly, tedious
Winter night, let us forsake these earthly
Dark abodes, and haste to mingle with the saints
On high. [Dies.]

Selim. Swiftly I'll follow with a
Bridegroom's speed. Virtue,—Affection,—two
Exalted names;—in your defence, I drew
My honest sword. Heroic spirits of
Departed warriors, behold I fall
Unspotted as I liv'd, and like the sun
Set in an orb of glory. [Dies.]

Sultan. May clement
Heav'n receive their parting souls. Sure they lov'd
Well. For, lo! the blood that issues from their
Wounds, joins in one blended stream. To thee
[To Achmet.]

I here resign Armenia's crown. Farewel
Ye gilded vanities of life; the cringe
Of flatt'ry, and the trump of fame. I'll seek
The gloomy, solitary cell, where peace
It's mild associate makes abode.

Achmet. A crown's
A gift scarce worth acceptance now.——The purple
Greatness, and the glare of state, will only
Give a keener sense of anguish, and add
Misfortunes that escape the croud. The shrub
Avoids the winged light'ning's rage, that blasts
The lofty cedar's top.——Whoe'er pursues
Fruition of content, must pass the throne,
And calmly seek it in the rustic's cave.

End of the fifth Act.

HARD is the task impos'd (in times like these)
 On ev'ry Bard, the gen'ral Taste to please;
 Since it remains in no continu'd sphere,
 But like a phantom moves—'tis here!—'tis there!
 As various fancies diff'rent men display,
 So few approve the same Dramatic Lay.

With martial wreaths, the noisy soldier clad
 Enthusiastic, military mad,
 Smiles when the tragic muse is sheath'd in arms,
 And GA—R—K's Richard wears a thousand charms.

Well pleas'd with Lee, whose muse was wont to tane,
 Under the pale dominion of the moon:
 The stage-struck youth, (averse to joke or pun)
 Up-born by clouds, encores great Philip's son.

The melting lass, whose languid eyes impart,
 The softest feeling of a tender heart,
 With pleasure oft doth Otway's piece survey,
 And lovely Belvidera bears the sway.

Newly arriv'd, pert miss, from school in France,
 Whose head is turn'd by Novel or Romance,
 Likes Rowe's pathetic scenes extreamly well,
 And gay Lothario's figure bears the bell.

If therefore palates various meats demand,
 As divers culture's us'd to diff'rent land,
 A British Muse by us consulted long,
 Has lain down this the standard of her song,
 That you'll a spurious taste adopt no more,
 But feed as our forefathers fed before.
 To-night we hope our Drama's fare is good,
 We know it plain, but think it wholesome food.



